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CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURGI

ARMY PLACES EMERGENCY ORDER

Indian Army has contracted Pune-based defence manufacturer Nibe Ltd to procure equipment and ammunition for its universal rocket launchers

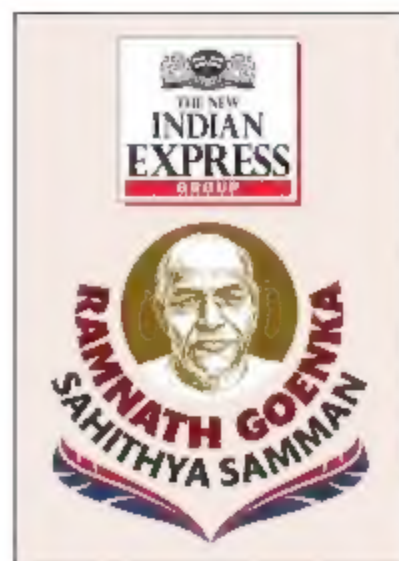
ROCKETS TO HAVE STRIKING RANGE OF 300 KM

"The Company has entered into Supply Contract with the Indian Army for Manufacturing and Supply of Ground Equipment, Accessories, ESP and Ammunition for Universal Rocket Launcher System capable of integrating multiple rocket types including rockets striking at ranges of 150 km and 300 km for a consideration of ₹292.69 cr," Nibe said in an exchange filing

ORDER TO BRING ISRAELI FIRM'S 'PULS' SYSTEMS TO INDIA

In July 2025, NIBE had entered into an agreement with Elbit Systems, Israel to manufacture PULS multiple rocket launcher systems in India. Sources said the latest order is for PULS | P12

THE ORDER IS SUPPOSED TO BE EXECUTED AND DELIVERED WITHIN 12 MONTHS



I am really affirmed that stories from the farthest places in the map also belong to the centre of the literary world in India

Subi Taba, RINGSS winner for Best Fiction



History, politics, biographies... people, all come alive as narrative non-fiction

Sudeep Chakravarti, RINGSS awardee for Best Non-Fiction



I hope this award will help in putting the lives of workers at the forefront, who don't even get a minimum daily wage



Vice President of India C P Radhakrishnan and *The New Indian Express* group Chairman Manoj Kumar Sonthalia, his wife Kalpana Sonthalia, *TNIE* CEO Lakshmi Menon, Editor Santwana Bhattacharya, Editorial Director Prabhu Chawla, Dinamani Editor K Vaidyanathan, TN ministers Palanivel Thiaga Rajan and Ma Subramanian with the Ramnath Goenka Sahitya Samman recipients Dr Chandrashekhara Kambara, Neha Dixit, Subi Taba and Sudeep Chakravarti, at an event in Chennai on Friday | ASHWIN PRASATH

Fearless journalism, literature vital for democracy, says V-P

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

STRESSING that no nation can emerge without fearless journalism and deep literature, Vice President C P Radhakrishnan on Friday said freedom of expression remains the cornerstone of Indian democracy. He was speaking at the third edition of the Ramnath Goenka Sahitya Samman (RINGSS), *The New Indian Express* (TNIE) group's annual literary award honouring excellence in Indian writing, which was held in the city.

At the event, legendary playwright Dr Chandrashekhara Kambara was conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award

in recognition of his decades-long contribution to literature, particularly Kannada poetry, theatre and folklore-based writing. Kambara is among India's most revered literary figures — a Kannada writer, thinker, playwright, folklorist and theatre activist whose life's work has profoundly shaped the nation's cultural imagination.

Subi Taba won the RINGSS for Best Fiction for *Tales from the Dawn-Lit Mountains*, Sudeep Chakravarti received the award for Best Non-Fiction for *Fallen City: A Double Murder, Political Insanity, and Delhi's Descent from Grace*, while Neha Dixit won the Best Debut award for *The Many Lives of Syeda X: The Story of an Unknown Indian*.

Speaking at the event, Vice President Radhakrishnan paid rich tributes to Ramnath Goenka, doyen of Indian print journalism and the visionary founder of *The New Indian Express* group, saying he stood firm for journalistic integrity, intellectual courage and democratic values during some of the most challenging periods in the nation's history.

"Goenka remains the conscience keeper of Indian democracy. His commitment to fearless expression continues to inspire generations," he said. Recalling Goenka's resistance during Emergency, the Vice President said he demonstrated the power of silence by publishing a blank editorial as a mark

of protest against press censorship.

Addressing the gathering, *TNIE* CMD Manoj Kumar Sonthalia said the award was a tribute to writers who wield the pen with courage, imagination and integrity.

He recalled the legacy of Ramnath Goenka, describing him as a steadfast believer in the power of the printed word, not merely as a vehicle for news, but as an engine of ideas and an instrument of change.

TN ministers Palanivel Thiaga Rajan and Ma Subramanian, *TNIE* Editor Santwana Bhattacharya, Editorial Director Prabhu Chawla, CEO Lakshmi Menon and *Dinamani* Editor K Vaidyanathan participated.

Dinamani boxed item led me to V-P's office: CPR

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

RECALLING that reading a news item in Tamil daily *Dinamani*, a sister publication of the *TNIE* group, shaped his political journey and eventually led him to one of the country's highest constitutional offices, Vice President C P Radhakrishnan on Friday said fearless journalism has the power to change lives, as he paid tribute to Ramnath Goenka at the third edition of the Ramnath Goenka Sahitya Samman (RINGSS) in Chennai.

The Vice President said a boxed item carried next to *Dinamani*'s masthead, a format which has now changed, reported a protest by the Jana Sangh, the predecessor of the BJP, against the Turkish Consulate in Delhi. The protest was against Turkey's decision to ban books written by former President S Radhakrishnan, including *The Hindu View of Life*.

"Nobody questioned it (book ban) at that time. Only Jana Sangh, under the leadership of Vijay Kumar Malhotra ji, staged a dharna outside the Turkish Consulate. That impressed me," he said. Radhakrishnan added that he spent nearly a year searching for the party before eventually joining Jana Sangh, a decision, which he said, has now led him to the office of the Vice President.

Radhakrishnan described Ramnath Goenka as a towering figure who stood firm for journalistic integrity, intellectual courage and democratic values during some of the most challenging periods in the nation's history.

CONTINUED ON: P11

EC rejects TMC bid to push BLAs at SIR hearing sessions

MUKESH RANJAN @ New Delhi

THE Election Commission of India (ECI) has rejected the Trinamool Congress' request to allow the party's booth level agents (BLAs) at the hearing sessions regarding the draft voters' list. The ongoing second stage of the three-phase Special Intensive Revision exercise focuses on hearing sessions on claims and objections.

Sources said if the TMC's request is accepted, the poll panel will have to accept similar demands from other political parties — six national and two state parties.

TMC claimed the ECI deliberately rejected the party's plea because other registered political parties in the state, especially the BJP, do not have enough strength to field BLAs for all hearing tables.

ECI sources said the poll panel cannot operate on such assumptions.

BALLARI CLASH

SP suspended, 5 guns seized, 11 booked

KIRAN BALANNANAVAR @ Ballari

THE state government suspended Ballari Superintendent of Police Pavan Nejjuru on charges of dereliction of duty following clashes between BJP and Congress workers that led to the death of a Congress worker due to a bullet injury and stone-throwing while a banner was being put up near the statue of Maharshi Valmiki in Ballari city on Thursday.

The SP, who took charge on December 31, was suspended within 24 hours. He was earlier working as SP in Lokayukta in Bengaluru.

In connection with the incident, the police seized five firearms from two gunmen. A case was registered at the Brucepel police station against 11 people, including Janardhan Reddy (accused no. 1), his brother Somashekar Reddy and former minister B Sriramulu, based on complaints filed by Congress workers, who alleged provocation and murder. BJP too filed a counter-complaint against Congress MLA Nara Bharath Reddy and five others.

After the incident, the inauguration of Valmiki statue was postponed due to security reasons.

CONTINUED ON: P4

Majority in K'taka trusted EVMs during '24 polls, finds EC survey

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Bengaluru

IN a disappointment to Congress and Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, who had launched a campaign against BJP and Election Commission of India, accusing them of indulging in 'vote chori', besides expressing suspicions over electronic voting machines (EVMs), a detailed survey commissioned by the Election Commission indicates that 83.61% of respondents expressed trust in the electoral process and EVMs. The study also reflected the growing influence of money and muscle power in Bengaluru and Mysuru divisions.

The study also mentioned its limitations, stating that respondents may have provided socially desirable or inaccurate responses on sensitive topics like inducements, trust in EVMs or political beliefs, affecting data reliability.

The overall duration of the study was short, limiting deeper engagement with communities and reducing the opportunity to capture temporal changes in be-

haviour or awareness, it said. The sample size and the selected constituencies in the baseline and endline surveys were different, and the study did not follow the same cohort of respondents, which weakens longitudinal comparison and limits the ability to assess true behavioural change over time, it elaborated.

The study, 'Lok Sabha Elections 2024 - Evaluation of Endline Survey of Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) of Citizens' for the Karnataka Monitoring and Evaluation Authority (KMEA), under the Planning, Programme Monitoring and Statistics Department of the state, was commissioned to assess the outcomes of the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) programme implemented by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Karnataka. The study was conducted in mid-May 2025 and the Mysuru-based NGO Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement (GRAAM) evaluated and published the 305-page report in August.

CONTINUED ON: P4

EXPRESS READ

K'taka may get own employment scheme, keep Gandhi name

Bengaluru: Condemning the Centre's move to replace the MGNREGA with the VB-G RAM G Bill, the Karnataka cabinet decided to formulate its own employment guarantee scheme and retain the name of Mahatma Gandhi | P4

CET to be held on April 23, 24; registration begins from Jan 17

Bengaluru: The Common Entrance Test 2026 will be held on April 23 and 24 and the registration will begin on January 17. While CET for Physics and Chemistry will be held on April 23, Maths and Biology will be held on April 24 | P5

Patients go missing from Nimhans, Kidwai

RASHMI PATIL @Bengaluru

IN a matter of grave concern, 55 patients who had come for consultation to the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (Nimhans) and Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology went missing from January 1, 2024 to August 14, 2025. Of them, three are yet to be traced and handed back to their families.

The majority of them went missing at the most unexpected moments — when their caretakers were collecting bills, buying medications, busy with phone calls or even while shar-



ing their experiences with others in the OPD.

As per the missing persons record at the Siddapura police station in Jayanagar, Kadappa Rodannavar (81) went missing from NIMHANS on May 23, 2024 and Munikrishnappa (70) on November 6, 2025. Similarly, Shantawamy (52) went miss-

ing on April 30, 2025 from Kidwai hospital premises. They have remained untraced.

Dr Arvind HR, Deputy Medical Superintendent, NIMHANS, said, "People with mental health illness have a tendency to run away and we trace them and hand them back to their family members. We also have an Incident Reporting Committee at the hospital that looks into missing person cases. In most instances, patients who go missing suffer mainly from schizophrenia and bipolar disorders, while some would have been diagnosed with dementia." CONTINUED ON: P7

Missing data

2025

22 patients from NIMHANS, 3 from Kidwai went missing

2024

27 patients from NIMHANS and 3 from Kidwai went missing

Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

ಚಿತ್ರಾ ಸಂಥೆ
CHITRA SANCHE

Sri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister

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Kumara Krupa Road, Bengaluru - 560 001

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Sunday, 04.01.2026 at 10.30 a.m.

Inauguration by
Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka

Art Exhibition Inauguration by
Sri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka

Chief Guests

Dr. M.C. Sudhakar
Hon'ble Minister for Higher Education,
Government of Karnataka

Sri P.C. Mohan
Hon'ble Member of Parliament,
Bengaluru Central

Sri S.T. Somashekar
Hon'ble Member of the Legislative Assembly,
Yeshwanthpur Constituency

Sri Rizwan Arshad
Hon'ble Member of the Legislative Assembly,
Shivajinagar Constituency

Sri S.N. Agarwal
Eminent Industrialist & President,
Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath Trust

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Principal, College of Fine Arts

Bhriku Kumar Sharma
Principal, BSVA Evening College

Executive Committee Members

As is enshrined in our Constitution, to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture is the fundamental duty of every citizen of the country.

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